



**A Case Study of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)**

**in a**

**Hong Kong Secondary School**

**Francis Kam Cheung Lee**

**Ed.D. Thesis**

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the Faculty of Education  
at the University of Technology, Sydney  
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## **Certificate of Original Authorship**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Francis Kam Cheung Lee', written over a horizontal line.

**Francis Kam Cheung Lee**

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## **Abstract**

The current thesis is a case study of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in a Hong Kong school context. Its contributions are two-fold. Firstly, it is an empirical investigation of the actual implementation of TBLT, thereby contributing to the literature in this area. To date, the literature has focused on TBLT either as an effective syllabus or as a set of detailed methodology principles and activities (Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2001; Candlin, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Johnson, 2003; Nunan, 2004, Willis & Willis, 2007). The significance of this thesis is, therefore, its empirical focus. Secondly, the original contribution of this thesis is its focus on the Hong Kong context, in particular, describing and critiquing the relationship between the Hong Kong curriculum framework and the perception and practice of TBLT in a local secondary school.

The subjects came from a government secondary school in Hong Kong. They included ten English teachers and 158 students. The data were collected through a triangulated approach comprising surveys, lesson observations and personal interviews. The findings indicate that both the teacher and student subjects generally had favourable attitudes towards TBLT. The findings also reflect significant discrepancies between the teachers' perceptions of TBLT and their actual practices. Suggestions have been made to explain such discrepancies, for example, misconceptions of TBLT by teachers and poor learning motivation of students. This study also reveals that the school selected for the study lacked favourable conditions for the implementation of TBLT.

Not only does this study confirm the value of TBLT in a Hong Kong context, but it also enriches the literature by presenting an insider's perspective of TBLT. Although the findings could conclude that TBLT is well received by both teachers and students, it was also found that teacher training for TBLT was insufficient and students were not well informed of their active role in the English language teaching and learning process. In

light of these findings, the effectiveness of TBLT remains a goal rather than an accomplished fact in this school.

This study is significant for the professional development and training of English language teachers as it reveals and describes the discrepancies that exist between the teachers' perceptions and practices. Some factors that contributed to such discrepancies were beyond the teachers' control, *e.g.*, students' learning motivation and the 'washback' effect from public examinations, *etc.* As both students and teachers expressed their preference for TBLT, further studies of implementation strategies of school-based TBLT are desirable.